

# NEWS Release BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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BLM  
Medford District Office

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**  
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## **BLM issues Final Soda Mtn Wilderness Stewardship Plan**

Medford, OR: Today, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces the release of the Final Soda Mountain Wilderness Stewardship Plan. The Soda Mountain Wilderness was created in March 2009 under the Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009.

The Soda Mountain Wilderness encompasses the rich biological and geological diversity in the mountains southeast of Ashland, Oregon. The new wilderness lies on the south side of the BLM Medford District. The heart of the wilderness is the 5,720-foot high Boccard Point where the great basin meets three mountain ranges. The older Klamath Range comes up from the south while the much younger Siskiyou Range extends from the west. Jutting up from the north is the very young Cascade Range.

The law designated approximately 24,100 acres within the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument as wilderness. Upon designation, BLM guidance provides for public involvement and the timely writing of a management plan.

In 2010, the BLM conducted an extensive inventory of the Soda Mountain Wilderness and held two public scoping meetings to gather input from the public as well as various interest groups and other agencies. In the fall of 2011, the Soda Mountain Wilderness Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment featuring a proposed action and three alternatives was available for public review. A 45-day public comment period followed publication of the Environmental Assessment.

*“How wonderful to have a wilderness so close to town. The Soda Mountain Wilderness provides a chance to recharge and enjoy beautiful scenery and open space within an hour’s drive”* said BLM Medford District Manager Dayne Barron.

### **Highlights of the Plan**

The final plan draws from public comments as well as elements of the proposed action in the Environmental Assessment. By law, Wilderness designation generally limits human activities to non-motorized / non-mechanized recreation, such as hiking, backpacking, hunting, fishing, horseback-riding, scientific research, and other non-invasive activities. In addition the plan also includes:

- The final plan approves two roads-to-trails conversions – one utilizes part of the former Pilot Rock Road up to the Pacific Crest Trail, the other creates a loop trail utilizing the old Schoheim Road. The plan also provides a reroute of the trail up to Pilot Rock to reduce erosion and improve safety.
- The final plan will actively remove, recontour, and restore approximately 23 miles of former vehicle routes and remove 81 culverts, restoring ecological function to important creeks and streams.



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- All fires will be controlled when they pose a threat to human life or property within wilderness areas, or to prevent the spread of fire to areas outside of the wilderness where life, resources, or property may be threatened.
- Target shooting and physical geo-caching will not be allowed in the Soda Mountain Wilderness.

There is a 30-day appeal period following issuance of the Decision Record before the decision can take effect. Appeals must be mailed to the Medford District Manager, 3040 Biddle Road, Oregon 97504, and be postmarked by May 14, 2012. A copy of the appeal, statement of reasons and all other supporting documents must also be sent to the Regional Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, 805 SW Broadway #600, Portland, Oregon 97205-3346.

The final plan is available at:

<http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/medford/plans/files/SMW001-3.pdf>

The Final Stewardship Plan and the supplemental Reader's Guide may be found on the Monument homepage under "Learn more about the CSNM".

<http://www.blm.gov/or/resources/recreation/csnm/>

Additional information about the National Landscape Conservation System is available online at:

[http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/blm\\_special\\_areas/NLCS.html](http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/blm_special_areas/NLCS.html)

**The BLM's National Landscape Conservation System contains some of the West's most spectacular landscapes. It includes nearly 27 million acres of National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and National Scenic and Historic Trails. The National Landscape Conservation System works to conserve the essential fabric of the West, while offering exceptional opportunities for recreation, solitude, wildlife viewing, exploring history, and scientific research.**

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**About the BLM:** The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land – the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, recreational and other activities on BLM-managed land contributed more than \$130 billion to the U.S. economy and supported more than 600,000 American jobs. The Bureau is also one of a handful of agencies that collects more revenue than it spends. In FY 2012, nearly \$5.7 billion will be generated on lands managed by the BLM, which operates on a \$1.1 billion budget. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

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